796 was a ceremonial washing of the King's hair at the New Year, called the *tha-gyan daw gyi*. The water was always brought from the clear springs of *Gaung-se kyun*, the island lying dark and green in the Moulmein river. The island had a special sanctity because it was believed to [823] hang suspended from the heavens by an invisible cord. When the island passed into British territory after the first Burmese war, however, the waters of Gaung-se kyun were no longer used for this sacred purpose, and substitute clear water was got from the Irrawaddy.

515 796 Burmese people wash their hair with the alkaline juices of the bark of a tree known as *tha-yaw*, combined with the seeds of the *accacia concina*. The bark, which is stored in a dried condition, is soaked for a few hours before washing, the accacia seeds are boiled in their pods until they are soft and are then crushed into the tha-yaw water. The result is a slippery mixture which we still use in preference to modern shampoos on the market. The provision of this in basins, and of clear water in big jars on our bamboo platform, was considered a meritorious act on New Year's eve. About twenty people came, bringing towels and a change of clothing. They washed their hair and bathed on the bamboo platform over the creek. The ladies put thanakha thickly on their cheeks and gave children blobs where the "roses" of English children's cheeks are, and we all sat on the edge of the platform, hair floating free in the breeze, and watched the sun go down. At night we helped to put the ground bark into little cups and stuck tha-byay leaves in the pots and went to bed full of pleasant anticipations. Tha-gya Min usually arrived about midnight, when Uncle Pyant got out his revolver and fired a salute to announce his arrival to the village. My male cousins stayed up to pour the water pots away, but we slept right through this actual arrival.

796 Early next morning we woke up to find big tubs of water placed on the front verandah. Uncle Pyant gave each child a piston for squirting water, and there was terrific excitement as we chased about the house to greet each other with the first pouring of water. Our maids and dependents always affected great terror at the immodesty of being bathed by great splashes from my male cousins; they shrieked and clambered up ladders in a most unladylike fashion and tried to barricade themselves from the drenching. In the street, too, fun had begun already. Children of about eight years and below were all stripped naked and let loose with their pistons and tubs of water to run and soak each passer-by.

But in the kitchens of the houses aunts and mothers were busy dishing out the morning meal to be sent up to the *zayat* where grandmothers keeping the fast would eat only this one meal of the day. My cousin Ma Aye Shwe and the dependent girls put on their brightest clothes of washable materials and set the trays on their heads. All the

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

houses, for the niche shrines, if there are more than one at the pagoda, are always at the four cardinal points, and if there is only one, as is usual at small pagodas, it is to the East.

The sadā is carefully kept by the parents until the child is old enough to take care of it himself, and thenceforward it is guarded as the most valuable possession the person has. No matter how often the name is changed the new one is never put in the sadā, so that this certificate cannot be trusted to implicitly for a man's name. Some of them are very beautifully engraved and ornamented, but they are naturally not often to be seen. I only know of two in England at the present time (1881), one of which is my own and the other belonging to a travelling Burman. When a man dies, the sadā is either destroyed or preserved as a memento by the family. A great many sadās were found and carried off as curiosities during the Third Burmese War. There is one at Abbotsford.

A curious instance of the firm belief of the nation in the reasonableness of the conviction that the planet under which one is born influences the fates and actions of one's life, is the fact that royalty ordained that the coins and measures used by traders should bear the emblem of the monarch's birthday. Thus for example all the gold coins used in Upper Burma bazaars during the penultimate reign had the figure of a lion on them, Mindôn Min having been born on a Tuesday. The few remaining from previous reigns bearing other symbols were rigidly kept out of the sight of Burmese officials. The Convenor of the Fifth Great Synod, though probably the mildest and best sovereign Burma ever had, would certainly have stood no trifling in matters of this kind, which, if not amounting actually to a part of the religion, were at any rate very intimately connected with it. His son Thibaw Min, however, notoriously indifferent to religion, if a stronger word might not even be admissible, let the old weights remain in use, and probably called it the march of civilisation.

The naming and the construction of the sadā being finished, the principal events in the youthful Burman's life are over, and the children run about in as happy a state of nudity as the respectability of the family permits; and boys and girls steal grandmamma's cheroot, and potter about

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

for Ne'ban, these eleven seats only remain constantly undisturbed.

Then there is chaos for an athinkaya. When that mighty season has passed, rain begins to fall again throughout infinity. Fire, water, or wind may destroy the world, but water alone can reproduce it, though both the sun and the wind have minor parts to play. The drops gradually increase in size till they reach the volume of five, ten, a hundred, even a thousand yuzanas (a yuzana being about twelve miles English). The wind blows the water together in the spot occupied by the last world. A greasy scum gathers on the surface. The action of the sun gradually hardens this into a crust, which eventually assumes the exact appearance and shape of the last world. The Lord Buddha himself, it is written, did not know which was the first world and which would be the last. Many learned writers say that there is neither a beginning nor an end to the production and destruction of worlds. It will go on for ever like a great wheel, even as the great wheel of the Law itself. Since sorrow then is shadow to life, how should all beings strive to escape from the vortex of existences? In the *Abhidhamma* we read that there are two descriptions of worlds, called Thôn-nya Kabā and A-thôn-nya Kabā, that is to say, worlds to which the Buddhas came, and those to which they did not come. Some think that the latter kind of worlds must have been uninhabited. However that may be, it is certain that the law has always existed. It existed Kalpas and Mahakalpas before the first Budh came to this earth. The Buddhas only revive the knowledge of it among creatures upon the painful ladder of existence. Our present world, called Badda, has been particularly favoured. Already four Buddhas have appeared, and when the dispensation of Shin Gautama shall have passed away, two thousand five hundred years hence, there will come another, Arimadéya, whose stature will exceed the highest mountains in all the Southern Island.

The system of the world as explained by the Buddhist Yahandas is somewhat different from that adopted by western men of science. In the centre is the Myinmo Taung, Mount Meru, the highest peak of all the world. Its

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

823
779
772

shape is somewhat peculiar, like a cask floating end upwards in water. A height of 84,000 yuzanas above the sea is counterbalanced by as many of depth below the surface. It is supported on three feet, each a huge ruby or carbuncle. In the space between these feet dwell the Athura, the Nats who were tempted to drink by new arrivals in the seat of Toktheeta, and when overcome by the liquor were hurled into the sea by their crafty rivals. At various heights on the central mountain are ranged the six blissful seats of the Déwas, but many of them dwell elsewhere. Thus, for example, the sun, the moon, and most of the stars and planets are simply gorgeous dwellings of Nats. Away in the empyrean, rising perpendicularly one above the other, are the sixteen seats of Rupa, where the Byammās, the Perfect, dwell. These have got rid of almost all the passions, but especially of concupiscence. It is not till they have freed themselves from all affection for matter and material things that they can pass beyond to the incalculable heights of the four seats of Arupa, where the Immaterials dwell in a state of sublimest contemplation waiting only for the moment when they shall pass beyond into Ne'ban. Down below the earth, in a mass of hard rock, are the eight great Hells and the numberless smaller ones. Surrounding the Myinmo Taung and girdling round the earth are the seven ranges of the Sekyawala mountains, with seven seas interposed. In the sea round about Mount Myinmo, the great Thamôddaya Ocean, are the four great islands—Ottayakuru to the north, Pyôppawideha to the east, Aparagawyan to the west, and Zampudipa to the south. In the Southern Island dwells the race of man. Each of the great islands has five hundred smaller ones round about it, and in these islands dwell the English and other nations other than the Buddhists and the Indian heretics.

The Thamôddaya sea is too stormy to allow of any one passing from one of the great islands to any other. The Southern Island is the largest, and is shaped like a trapezium. The Western Island is like the full moon, the Northern is square, and Pyôppawideha is shaped like the moon in her quarters. The shape of the head of the different inhabitants follows the shape of the island, and the different sides

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

823 779 772

of Mount Meru give their different colours to each island. Thus the Eastern Island is all white from being opposite to the silver face of the mountain; the Western is green, because on that side Myinmo is of glass; the Northern Island glitters like gold, and the Southern is a pale-coloured brown-like carbuncle. Each island is named from the great tree which grows upon it and forms the sacred insignia of the island. Thus the Southern Island is named from the Zampu tree, the great Eugenia.

The Eastern, Western, and Northern Islands are very pleasant to dwell in, but especially the Northern. There the people live to the age of a thousand years, and always appear to be no more than eighteen. In the other islands they only live to be five hundred. In other respects the Northern Island is a regular land of Cockayne. The fabled Padetha Bin, elsewhere only found in the happy countries of the Nats, grows there. From its bounteous branches hang the most gorgeous dresses of every variety of colour, and the happy islanders have only to take them off. Nor are they at any necessity to till the ground to procure themselves food. From this tree they obtain also an abundant supply of a most excellent kind of rice, already husked to their hands. All that they have to do is to place it on a certain large stone, and it is forthwith cooked, and upon the branches of the trees round about appear the most dainty meats. Truly the Northern islanders have a most enviable existence. But in one respect, like the inhabitants of the Eastern and Western isles, they are unhappy. They are always born back to the same island. They cannot raise themselves in the scale of being, like the otherwise sorrowful Southern islanders. Only in Zampudipa do the Buddhas appear to teach the law and free the people from constant deaths and reappearances. From Tahingaya, the first Buddha, to Shin Gautama, under whose dispensation we now live, there have been twenty-eight Buddhas, and all of them have come to the great Southern Island. To Byammās, to Nats, even to animals and the agonised dwellers in the lowest hells, the blessed words have come, but never to those other dwellers in the islands of the great sea Thamôddaya. Thus are men enabled to attain to the state of Nats, to pass

779 775

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

the pagoda. Many of the lists of donations are, however, graven in a less cramped kyauk-sa, or "stone writing," the givers having probably had a weak hankering after earthly fame. Thus a goodly marble slab with a long list of names may be seen at the Shwe Hmaw-daw, and a tablet near the Mya Thalôn, the Temple of the Emerald Bed (of the Buddha), at Ma-gwe in Upper Burma records how Min Din and Min La-go had in the year 2399 of religion covered the whole payā with yellow cloth, repaired it thoroughly, and had it painted red and gold. An exact account is given of the amount of materials used and the money paid to workmen, and the inscription ends up with a prayer that the family of the donors might be gratified with the birth of a son. Near it is a magic stone with the figure of a hare, surrounded by stars, deeply graven in it to represent the moon, and a peacock to represent the sun.

A frequent adjunct of many pagodas is the Shwe Zet-daw, the imprint of the Lord Buddha's foot. It is too nearly square to command a painter's or sculptor's praise, and the toes are all of the same length, as may be seen in the example carried off by Captain Marryat, the novelist, in the first Burmese war, and now preserved in the British Museum. The sole is divided into a hundred and eight squares (taya shi' kwet), and on them are many lekkhana, representations of monasteries, pyathats, tigers, kalawaiks, henthas, parrots, seipputi fish, and the like, to signify that all things were under the feet of the Great Master. The number of beads on the rosary corresponds with the number of squares on the Shwe Zet-daw. The most famous example is at the pagoda of that name east of Mandalay, the great resort of the Shans, and another well-known one is opposite Magwe, inland from Minbu, where the mud volcanoes are, "the boiling vats of the nagās." But there are many specimens all over the country, not a few with the figure of a nagā, or sea monster, reared over them.

Most famous among the small pagodas is the Kyaik-hti-yo, insignificant in size, but unique from its position. The hill on which it stands takes its name from the payā, and is over three thousand five hundred feet in height. On its summit are numbers of granitoid boulders, many of them

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

754

A woman who has seven sons or seven daughters in unbroken succession is almost certain to become a witch; her husband had better not quarrel with her at any rate.

823 ●

At Kāma, a small place between Prome and Thayetmyo, there is a spirit flame, a kind of Jack o' Lantern, in a hollow near the town. Long ago a smith was killed in a brawl and became a nat after death. He liked his old profession and set up a nat-fire, and worked away at nights on a spectral forge. The inhabitants soon found out what was going on, and after their first terror was over used to go out in the middle of the day and leave a piece of iron, saying, "Good Mr. Spirit, make me an axe, a dah, a hoe." Next day they found it all ready made. At last a Chin—just the sort of thing one of those stupid people would do—hid himself, and just when the midnight cocks had finished crowing, up rose the smith in human shape, dressed in a red paso and a flaring red turban. He began hammering away on his anvil, welding a sword. The infatuated Chin at last shouted, "Make it quick." The demon smith whipped round on the instant and flung the red-hot dah at him, burning his cheek. The indiscreet peeping Tom took to his heels and ran. After he had got a mile away he rubbed his blistered cheek, and in after-times there rose at that place Pāpôt, "the cheek-rubbing village." A mile farther on he began to shake all over with fatigue and terror, whence the name of Tôn, "the trembling village." Finally, when he reached the site of Paukpogu, the "swelling burst," he sank down on the ground, and was found there next morning with just enough life left to tell his story. The smith never worked again, but his fire may be seen to this day. Once a year all the house fires in Kāma are put out and lighted again from the nat-mi. Should any one neglect so to pay hônour to the nat, his house and all his goods will be burnt before the year is out. The resemblance to the legend of Wayland Smith at Lambourn in Berkshire is obvious. The naming of the villages is also a favourite form of Horne Took etymology prevalent all over Burma.

[513]
[186]

[103]

823

The common notion of earthquakes is that the earth is supported on the shoulders of four creatures called nga-hlyin. These monsters are less sturdy than the classical Atlas, and

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

● 823 occasionally want to shift shoulders. When they do so an earthquake is the result. Others declare that the quaking of the earth is caused by gusts of wind on the under surface of the world. The idea is that the solid mass of the earth is supported on a double thickness of water, and this again by twice its thickness of air, below which is a vacuum, occasionally, however, disturbed by storms. The Buddha gave a much more extensive explanation to his favourite disciple Ananda. "My son," he said, "eight causes make the earth tremble. First, the earth lies on a mass of water, which rests on the air, and the air on space; when the air is set in motion, it shakes the water, which in its turn shakes the earth; second, any being gifted with extraordinary powers; third, the conception of a payā laung for his last existence; fourth, his birth; fifth, his becoming a Buddha; sixth, his preaching the Law of the Wheel; seventh, his mastering and renouncing existence; eighth, his obtaining the state of Ne'ban. These are the eight causes of earthquakes."

777 The Law of the Wheel is the doctrine of the four great truths: pain, the production of pain, the destruction of pain, and the way leading to that destruction. These constantly revolve upon themselves, and the manifestation of these truths is the great work a Buddha has to perform.

787 Omens are drawn from the appearance of the sun and moon, and especially from the particular constellation which presides over one's birth. The howling of dogs, the flight and song of birds, the appearance of any strange creature, or of a wild animal in an unexpected place, all have their special meaning. So have the nervous twitchings of the eye, or of any part of the body. If the sun or any of the planets approaches the moon there is danger about. In the four months when Venus is not to be seen, in a month when there is an earthquake or an eclipse, and on the first or last day of a month, it is advisable not to cut one's hair, marry, build a house, or begin any important business whatever. These and hundreds more may be found in the Deitton, a book very full of singular information. Palmistry is a science of which every educated person professes to have more or less knowledge. The less a man knows, the more truculent his deductions are.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

764 heavy punishment under Burman rule. Latterly some
545 laymen in Rangoon have even been bold enough to glorify the
178 funerals of their relatives with keinnaya, figures of men or women with bird-like feet and lower extremities. These spangled toys, which are commonly to be seen in all monasteries, are properly only used at the last ceremonies of a member of the sacred order. But when some men are bold enough even to flaunt the royal white umbrella, it is hardly to be expected that the distinctive honours of the yahans would be respected.

764 The procession having been formed, a start is made.
[735] At the head come the alms intended for the monks and for the poor, some carried by men, some by women, the sexes going in separate lines. After this come the pyin-sin, never in any very great numbers, unless the a-hlu be particularly bountiful. Following them comes the band, and often a troop of singers. These are always hired for the purpose, and their callousness is as little to be cast up against Burman natural affection as the unlovable doings of the mutes at an English funeral. Close upon the musicians comes the bier carried by six or eight young men. Then in a general crowd follow the relations, friends, and neighbours, all on foot. Many passers-by, total strangers, join in the procession from motives of piety. Here and there the men carrying the bier stop and dance in a curious fantastic way to the measures of
[533] the dirge of the singers. The funeral *misereres* are usually the composition of an improvisatore in the chorus, and deal with the life and death and good actions of the deceased. A measure called maung pyaung is the most generally used.

Occasionally there is a tug-of-war with a rope as at a pôngyi's funeral, one side exclaiming, "We must bury our dead"; the other, "You shall not take away my friend." As a matter of necessity the former party must conquer, but they sometimes have to get recruits from the crowd before they can manage it.

764 It is a matter of regulation that a funeral should never
● 823 go to the north or to the east. The graveyard is usually to the west of the village, and the dead should all be carried out of a walled town by a gate reserved for this purpose. In Mandalay this a-mingala tagā was that to the south-west,

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

and it was avoided by those who had business in the myo as cursed, as indeed its name imports. Other rules are that a corpse must never be carried towards the centre of the town, still less can it be taken into it. If the man has died in the jungle, and the funeral has to pass a village, it skirts round the outside of it.

When the cemetery is reached, the coffin is taken out and placed on the ground near the grave. The immediate mourners collect round about it; the rest of the people go to the zayats, of which there are always several at every graveyard. The music stops as soon as this place is reached. The alms are set up in order before the pôngyis, and these again intone the five secular commandments, and the ten good works, besides a long string of Pali doxologies. As soon as they have finished they leave and file off to the monastery, the a-hlu being carried after them. The chief mourner at the same time pours water slowly out of a cocoanut shell, saying, "May the deceased and all present share the merit of the offerings made and the ceremonies now proceeding." This performance, called ye-set-kya, is a regular accompaniment of all almsgiving. The idea is that the earth will bear witness where men may forget. When Shin Gautama ascended the throne under the bawdi tree, Mān-nat, the devil, claimed that it was his, because he had discovered it first, and all his mighty host shouted aloud when he called upon them as witnesses. The Lord Buddha had no witness but the earth, and to it he appealed, asking whether he had not achieved the Three Great Works of Perfection, the Ten Great Virtues, and the Five Renouncements. The earth gave testimony to this kaung-hmu with a terrible roaring and a violent earthquake, so that Mān-nat and all his legions fled in terror. Hence the pouring out of water when alms are given.

While this is going on women are walking about the zayats distributing cheroots and sweet drinks, betel, le'pet, and biscuits among the visitors. The nearest relations are carrying out the final rites. The coffin is swung three times backwards and forwards over the open grave, and then lowered in. This ceremony, called utaikthi, is looked upon as a kind of final farewell, and after each person has thrown

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

great arm will seize you, and you will be pulled under and disappear for ever.

A Nat is much like a human being; if you treat him well he will treat you well, and conversely. Courtesy is never wasted on men or Nats, at least so a Burman tells me.

The highest Nats live in the mountains. The higher the Nat the higher the mountain; and when you get to a very high peak indeed, like Mainthong Peak in Wuntho, you encounter very powerful Nats.

They tell a story of Mainthong Peak and the Nats there, how all of a sudden, one day in 1885, strange noises came from the hill. High up on his mighty side was heard the sound of great guns firing slowly and continuously; there was the thunder of falling rocks, cries as of someone bewailing a terrible calamity, and voices calling from the precipices. The people living in their little hamlets about his feet were terrified. Something they knew had happened of most dire import to them, some catastrophe which they were powerless to prevent, which they could not even guess. But when a few weeks later there came even into those remote villages the news of the fall of Mandalay, of the surrender of the king, of the 'great treachery,' they knew that this was what the Nats had been sorrowing over. All the Nats everywhere seem to have been distressed at our arrival, to hate our presence, and to earnestly desire our absence. They are the spirits of the country and of the people, and they cannot abide a foreign domination.

But the greatest place for Nats is the Popa Mountain, which is an extinct volcano standing all

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

776 alone about midway between the river and the Shan
823 Mountains. It is thus very conspicuous, having no hills near it to share its majesty; and being in sight from all the old capitals, it is very well known in history and legend. It is covered with dense forest, and the villages close about are few. At the top there is a crater with a broken side, and a stream comes flowing out of this break down the mountain. Probably it was the denseness of its forests, the abundance of water, and its central position, more
[579] than its guardian Nats, that made it for so many years the last retreating-place of the half-robber, half-patriot bands that made life so uneasy for us. But the Nats of Popa Mountains are very famous.

776 When any foreigner was taken into the service
695 of the King of Burma he had to swear an oath of
823 fidelity. He swore upon many things, and among them were included 'all the Nats in Popa.' No Burman would have dared to break an oath sworn in such a serious way as this, and they did not imagine that anyone else would. It was and is a very dangerous thing to offend the Popa Nats; for they are still there in the mountain, and everyone who goes there must do them reverence.

776 A friend of mine, a police officer who was en-
823 gaged in trying to catch the last of the robber chiefs
[782] who hid near Popa, told me that when he went up the mountain shooting, he, too, had to make offerings. Some way up there is a little valley dark with overhanging trees, and a stream flows slowly along it. It is an enchanted valley, and if you look closely you will see that the stream is not as other streams, for it flows uphill. It comes rushing into

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

the valley with a great display of foam and froth, and it leaves in a similar way, tearing down the rocks, and behaving like any other boisterous hill rivulet; but in the valley itself it lies under a spell. It is slow and dark, and has a surface like a mirror, and it flows uphill. There is no doubt about it; anyone can see it. When they came here, my friend tells me, they made a halt, and the Burmese hunters with him unpacked his breakfast. He did not want to eat then, he said, but they explained that it was not for him, but for the Nats. All his food was unpacked, cold chicken and tinned meats, and jam and eggs and bread, and it was spread neatly on a cloth under a tree. Then the hunters called upon the Nats to come and take anything they desired, while my friend wondered what he should do if the Nats took all his food and left him with nothing. But no Nats came, although the Burmans called again and again. So they packed up the food, saying that now the Nats would be pleased at the courtesy shown to them, and that my friend would have good sport. Presently they went on, leaving, however, an egg or two and a little salt, in case the Nats might be hungry later, and true enough it was that they did have good luck. At other times, my friend says, when he did not observe this ceremony, he saw nothing to shoot at all, but on this day he did well.

The former history of all Nats is not known. Whether they have had a previous existence in another form, and if so, what, is a secret that they usually keep carefully to themselves, but the history of the Popa Nats is well known. Everyone who